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Chairman: Mr. Carrenza (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Guatemala)

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In the absence of Mr. Hachani (Tunisia), Mr. Carrenza (Guatemala), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 101: Crime prevention and criminal justice (*continued*) (A/53/3, A/53/371–S/1998/848, A/53/380, A/53/381 and A/53/416; A/C.3/53/L.2, L.3 and L.4)

Agenda item 102: International drug control (*continued*) (A/53/3, A/53/72–S/1998/156, A/53/95–S/1998/311, A/53/129–E/1998/58, A/53/204, A/53/371–S/1998/848, A/53/382, A/53/383 and A/53/416)

1. **Mr. Galuška** (Czech Republic) said that, despite some positive developments in global activities to fight drug production and trafficking, there were still more than 200 million drug users worldwide. Given the scope and seriousness of the problem, the international community had finally realized that cooperation was necessary. The General Assembly's special session of 1998 had been an excellent example of that change of perspective. The documents adopted as a result of the special session — the Political Declaration, the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction and the Action Plan — represented a sound basis for such cooperation. The international community was motivated by a common political will and had a powerful tool for the task: the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP). However, UNDCP could not reach its targets without adequate funding.

2. The Czech Republic had gone through a difficult transition period and remained sensitive to global economic turbulence. Nevertheless, it continued to pay close attention to the drug problem, primarily in two major areas: law enforcement and demand reduction. To address the root causes of drug abuse, it was necessary to strengthen the role of the family and improve the educational system, with the necessary support from highly qualified experts in that field, and, with their assistance, to give priority to the prevention of drug addiction among young people, particularly schoolchildren.

3. Global cooperation could benefit greatly from activities at the regional level. With substantial support from UNDCP, his country had developed close and successful cooperation with neighbouring countries. The Czech Republic looked forward to the next review meeting, to be held in Ljubljana in November 1998.

4. **Mr. Tabone** (Malta) said that, in the past, many countries had underestimated the threat posed by illegal activities related to drugs. No nation was immune to that scourge, nor could any nation stand up to it alone. Bilateral and multilateral activities spearheaded by UNDCP had yielded encouraging results. The current challenge was to maintain and increase the momentum created by the General Assembly's special session.

5. Owing to its geostrategic location at the centre of the Mediterranean, its small size and its limited interdiction capacity, which stood in contrast to the financial might of transnational crime, Malta was particularly vulnerable to drug trafficking, money-laundering, contraband and illegal migration, all of which posed a threat to its economic and fiscal system and to the maintenance of law and order. Malta had therefore entered into a number of bilateral and multilateral agreements with its neighbours in the Mediterranean and with the European Union, and fully supported the initiatives taken within the Euro-Mediterranean partnership to combat organized crime and the illegal drug trade.

6. Malta was pleased that the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1998/14, had endorsed the decision taken by the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, at its seventh session, to establish an open-ended intergovernmental ad hoc committee to elaborate a comprehensive international convention against transnational organized crime. Malta would also welcome international legal instruments to combat trafficking in women and children and the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms and ammunition. It was important that Member States should continue to monitor the implementation of the 1994 Naples Political Declaration and Global Action Plan.

7. Each year, money-laundering involved some $300 billion. If left unchecked, money-laundering could erode a country's financial institutions and threaten its very sovereignty. Malta had therefore introduced laws to improve the supervision of offshore banking institutions in its territory and to enforce existing regulations for the prevention of money-laundering.

8. **Mr. Al-Ethary** (Yemen) said that the current scope and diversity of criminal activities throughout the world resulted from a combination of interdependent endogenous and exogenous factors. The fight against crime called for a genuine political will at the national level, supported by constructive and effective international cooperation in a context of transparency and openness. His Government welcomed the reports of the Secretary-General on the issue

and the efforts made at the international level to fight crime, including the Naples Political Declaration and Global Action Plan against Organized Transnational Crime and the resolutions adopted at the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, held in Cairo in 1995. In the context of administrative and financial reforms of State institutions, the Government of Yemen, which had recently launched a campaign to prohibit the bearing of firearms and to promulgate laws to that effect, considered that regional and international cooperation were essential in order to fight crime, which posed a threat to the economies and the stability of all societies.

9. Like the rest of the international community, Yemen had realized that crime and drugs were inseparable and had become aware of the enormity of the task incumbent on the international community in the fight against drug trafficking, which posed a threat to all humanity. While it supported the strengthening of measures to combat that scourge and the adoption of laws that provided for the punishment of those who engaged in drug trafficking out of greed or for other reasons, Yemen felt that all necessary assistance and support should be given to drug addicts. Like all other countries, Yemen participated in efforts to combat drug trafficking; because of its geographical location and the length of its coastline, traffickers sought to use Yemen as a transit point. Although its security services had thwarted many attempts to bring drugs into the country, the Government of Yemen requested specialized regional and international services and the competent international agencies to assist it in combating that scourge, in the common interest.

10. **Ms. Gilbert-Roberts** (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the 14 member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) which were Members of the Organization, said that the drug control efforts which had been made by the United Nations for nearly 25 years had been largely unsuccessful because they had focused on producer countries and had not been matched by commensurate efforts in the consumer countries. Yet drugs had a pernicious effect on all countries, whatever their developmental status, political system or cultural orientation, and every Member State was affected.

11. The CARICOM States recognized the tremendous efforts which had been made by the international community during the United Nations Decade Against Drug Abuse not only to reduce demand but also to combat the activities which constituted the other links in the chain. They welcomed the various reports of the Secretary-General on the question and the special session of the General Assembly, in which they had actively participated.

12. Because of their small size, geophysical structure and fragile economies, the CARICOM States were especially vulnerable to the negative effects of illicit drug activities. The primary drug produced and consumed in the subregion was cannabis. Since some of its components had beneficial effects, particularly in the treatment of glaucoma, there were calls for the decriminalization of its use. The CARICOM States, however, remained committed to the prohibition of the illicit use of the substance, which gave rise to undesirable psychoactive reactions in users.

13. While the CARICOM States had achieved significant success in the eradication of cannabis crops, they had had less success in curtailing the trans-shipment of other drugs through their territories. Trans-shipment activities had actually intensified, particularly in island States where drug traffickers stored their cargo temporarily. In respect of cocaine, for example, only 50 per cent of shipments reached their destination, and the rest was destroyed en route or filtered into the populations of the trans-shipment States. There was therefore an escalation in drug addiction in the region, particularly among young people.

14. The CARICOM States lacked the necessary resources to establish long-term detoxification programmes. Despite generous contributions from the private sector and non-governmental and voluntary organizations, they were obliged to divert scarce resources from pressing developmental needs to deal with drug production and consumption.

15. It was also a matter for concern that, under the combined effect of globalization, liberalization and the rapid advance in technology, drug traffickers could more easily transfer funds and establish new transnational markets, while the legitimate exports of CARICOM countries continued to be subjected to discriminatory practices to the detriment of the economic and social development of those countries. For small States such as those in the Caribbean, globalization had actually exacerbated the economic crisis.

16. Nevertheless, the Governments of the CARICOM States were making every effort to prevent lucrative illicit drug activities from corrupting society. Aware of the tremendous advantages of regional cooperation, they valued the technical and financial support which UNDCP and the European Union were continuing to provide for the implementation of the 1996 Barbados Plan of Action. That plan, which constituted the principal framework for regional cooperation on drugs, also helped States in the implementation of international drug control treaties. The CARICOM States remained committed to full adherence to the three international drug control conventions and some

of them had also entered into bilateral agreements with the United States of America, in 1997.

17. It was essential for States to carry out joint action in the area of law enforcement. The CARICOM States, whose populations were small, were concerned about the proliferation of firearms, which had led to an escalation in the number of armed crimes, often culminating in multiple murders. They had therefore become signatories to the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunitions, Explosives and Other Related Materials.

18. Measures had been taken to combat money-laundering in countries with offshore banking facilities and to allow the confiscation of assets acquired by illicit means. A training centre had been established in 1997 in Jamaica; over 300 law enforcement officers had already been trained in interdiction and intelligence methods. Since 1996, law enforcement officials had increased their cooperation in the exchange of information on bank accounts and suspicious financial transactions. In a growing number of States of the region, banks were required to report transactions exceeding certain thresholds.

19. The CARICOM States fully recognized that the problem of illicit drugs could not be divorced from the broader question of economic and social development, particularly unemployment and poverty. They therefore welcomed the Action Plan on International Cooperation on the Eradication of Illicit Drug Crops and on Alternative Development.

20. The CARICOM States were in favour of a holistic approach to alternative development: basic values must be upheld, it must be ensured that replacement activities were reasonably lucrative, and international cooperation must be strengthened so as to encourage capital flows and development financing both in the public sector and in the private sector.

21. **Ms. Bennani** (Morocco) said that the drug problem had been exacerbated because of globalization, the liberalization of international markets, the abolition of borders and the revolution in communications. The drug trade thus played an essential role in the spread of many evils, in particular organized crime, international terrorism, trafficking in firearms, money-laundering and the corruption of state institutions. The proliferation of synthetic drugs and psychotropic substances produced in laboratories, which were more difficult to control than cultivated drugs, was liable to nullify the efforts made by the international community. The General Assembly, at its twentieth special session, had adopted a global strategy to reduce illicit drug trafficking, abuse and production by the year 2008 by strengthening international cooperation and financial support for alternative activities.

22. UNDCP must be provided with the necessary resources to implement that strategy. Efforts to combat money-laundering must be conducted in conjunction with other countries and must target the main criminal groups. The adoption of a convention against organized transnational crime was therefore essential.

23. Morocco was concerned about respecting its international commitments arising from international conventions and was implementing a drug control policy based on supply reduction, control of illicit trafficking and intensification of international cooperation. It had decided to secure its maritime borders in order to limit drug trafficking by maritime routes and discourage the clandestine infiltration of illegal migrants to Europe; it had also established rules and mechanisms for cooperation with both the European Police Office and other regional and international bodies, and was carrying out alternative development projects to ensure sustainable development.

24. Her delegation welcomed the efforts being made in the north of the country. Morocco was also endeavouring to broaden its cooperation with its various partners, particularly the members of the European Union, both in the fight against drugs and in the financing of development projects.

25. The Moroccan delegation welcomed the efforts being made by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) to mobilize resources and hoped that donor countries and international financial institutions would adopt an equally resolute approach to providing the necessary aid to countries that were determined to combat the scourge of drugs. It appealed to the international community to provide the necessary assistance to the United Nations African Regional Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFRI) to enable it to assist African States in the implementation of crime prevention strategies and to strengthen coordination between law enforcement agencies at the regional and subregional levels.

26. **Mr. Botnaru** (Republic of Moldova), speaking also on behalf of Ukraine, supported the statement made by the representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union. The Moldovan and Ukrainian Governments were deeply concerned at the increasing threat which organized crime and the problem of illicit drugs posed to development and to mankind as a whole. Because of their global dimensions, the two problems could be addressed effectively only through international cooperation and improved coordination of

national, regional and international efforts to deal with them. In that connection, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine were following with interest the preparations for the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders, which was due to be held in Austria in the year 2000 and noted with satisfaction the outcome of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly devoted to the drug problem, which had been held in New York in June 1998. They supported in particular the measures stipulated in the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction and the Action Plan on International Cooperation on the Eradication of Illicit Drug Crops and Alternative Development.

27. Organized crime and money-laundering had become major concerns of the international community, particularly in countries with economies in transition. Also of concern was the illicit trafficking in drugs and arms, which negatively affected the economic development of the latter countries and undermined the confidence of the population in the process of reform. In recent years, the problem of the transit of illicit drugs through the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine had become more acute. Even though in the Republic of Moldova the problem was not as severe as in other countries, its geographical location on the "Balkan route" and the situation in the eastern region of the country posed genuine difficulties.

28. The Republic of Moldova and Ukraine were actively cooperating at the bilateral and multilateral levels in crime prevention and in combating illicit trafficking in arms and drugs. In collaboration with the Russian Federation and Belarus, they had also developed a highly effective initiative known as "Kanal", under which the law enforcement authorities of the different countries pooled their efforts and resources to strengthen border surveillance. Since drug traffickers tended to make Central and Eastern Europe the centre of their activities, other countries of the region were invited to take part in the implementation of the above-mentioned initiative.

29. As parties to the three main international Conventions on narcotic drug control, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine had always supported measures taken by the international community to ensure the implementation of the Conventions. They had also made substantial efforts to improve their national capacities to combat illicit drug and arms trafficking and money-laundering. They welcomed the activities of UNDCP and the Centre for International Crime Prevention, which had prepared and promoted the implementation of many decisions relating to the fight against the illegal production, trafficking in and sale of drugs, and noted with satisfaction that one of the priorities of UNDCP was to better coordinate the activities of the various United Nations bodies seeking to reduce the production of and trafficking in narcotic drugs and to strengthen the capacities of drug control institutions at both the national and international levels. The establishment of an international law enforcement academy in Budapest should help to improve the training of law enforcement officials and promote joint efforts to combat transnational organized crime.

30. Like other new democracies confronted with the problems of drugs, arms trafficking and money-laundering and lacking the institutional structures and financial resources to implement programmes for the education and treatment of drug addicts, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine were interested in strengthening their cooperation with UNDCP and CICP and in seeing the launching of new assistance projects. They hoped that the future activities of the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (ODCCP) would take into account the specific problems of their two countries.

31. Only concerted efforts at the national, regional and international levels could strengthen the global fight against illicit drugs and organized crime.

32. **Mr. Chaturvedi** (India) noted that the success of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly had perhaps been the most significant development in relation to the world drug problem. The adoption of the documents of the session at a high political level reflected a new international consensus and will to act in a concerted manner. Member States recognized that they shared a common responsibility in the fight against the global problem of drugs and that a balanced and integrated approach was needed to reduce by the year 2008 the trafficking in and abuse and production of illicit drugs. Equally important were the commitments relating to money-laundering, amphetamine-type stimulants and judicial cooperation. India was of the view that the strategies adopted to reduce supply and demand should be complementary and take into account the role of poverty and underdevelopment as well as the importance of alternative development programmes, respect for national sovereignty, and international cooperation in enforcement efforts.

33. The Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention should enable the United Nations to better take into account the linkages between drug trafficking, international crime, money-laundering, terrorism and trafficking in people.

34. The success in reducing production and in dismantling drug cartels in the Andean region, encouraging cooperation between drug producers and national and international

authorities and the reduction in demand in some consumption centres also constituted notable advances. The efforts being made by the countries concerned with the support of UNDCP, donor countries, regional development banks and the World Bank to devise alternative development programmes and projects in countries that were dependent on the drug industry were also encouraging.

35. Nevertheless, numerous areas of concern remained. The trend towards integration of criminal enterprises as markets became more integrated and the exploitation of the advantages provided by globalization to facilitate their operations, including financial transactions, loopholes in legislation that allowed access to banking institutions for purposes of money-laundering, the vulnerability of youth to drugs, the increase in the production and use of amphetamine-type stimulants and weaknesses in controls on the diversion of chemical precursors were all problems that needed to be tackled.

36. The progress made in certain areas should not obscure problems whose ramifications went far beyond drugs and crime. The links between poverty, underdevelopment, drug cultivation, production and trafficking, organized crime, arms trafficking, terrorism, trafficking in persons and money-laundering varied from area to area. In some regions of the world, drug trafficking was combined with religious extremism, the easy availability of arms, weak governmental authority, lax border controls, terrorism and mercenary activity, and systematic violations of basic human rights tolerated by certain elements of society, the security forces and Governments, and the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention hardly had the resources to address all those problems. That was one reason why the United Nations had suspended its activities in Afghanistan.

37. As the recent terrorist attacks in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam demonstrated, it was unconscionable to ignore such dangers, whatever the reason. It had unfortunately to be noted that the United Nations, because of its available resources and the mandate it had been given, was not currently in a position to deal with the situation. After the dangers were recognized and the priorities set, the resources made available to the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention should be enhanced and the international community should be requested to amend its mandate by elevating the struggle against such "complex" problems to a more political level.

38. Many heads of State or Government had warned in the general debate of the threat posed by terrorism. At the previous session, his country had also warned, during the debate on the Secretary-General's reform programme, of the dangers of tokenism where the challenge of terrorism interfered with good relations between States and hindered the movement of people and goods.

39. The Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention could help neighbouring countries to cope with the dangers of the production and transit of drugs by offering them technical assistance, and the United Nations system as a whole, with the help of the international community and of the countries concerned, could develop a more integrated and comprehensive approach. At the bilateral level, his country welcomed the forthcoming resumption of the dialogue at ministerial level with Pakistan on the issue of drugs. Lastly, it supported the drafting of a framework convention on transnational organized crime and of its proposed protocols, and the efforts of the Centre for International Crime Prevention to strengthen its operational capacities for technical assistance in areas such as the rule of law and juvenile justice.

40. **Ms. Vargas** (Costa Rica) said that drugs were a threat to democracy and to political systems throughout the world. As the President of her country had pointed out at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, drugs were the first worldwide aggression in history. Nobody was safe from them, young people in particular, and efforts to combat the worldwide drug problem required an integrated approach, aimed both at the production and consumption of drugs, and at drug trafficking and money-laundering.

41. Her country was a small, peaceful and democratic State with a population of only 3.5 million. The resources deployed since the abolition of the armed forces 50 years earlier had made it possible to strengthen health and education programmes, but they were not equal to the task of combating the scourge of drugs. Costa Rica needed international cooperation in order to establish a civilian peace force mandated to combat drug traffickers, but without abandoning its social programmes, since the country's geographical situation meant that it was likely to be used as a bridgehead for supplying the major centres of consumption.

42. Her country had two types of specialized police forces. Some were mandated to combat drugs and were answerable to a deputy minister, while others came under the body responsible for carrying out judicial investigations. Costa Rica had acceded to the international instruments dealing with the fight against drugs and was willing to become a party to any new instrument. Amendments had been made to the country's criminal legislation, in particular to the provisions of illegal earnings. Sixty per cent of the funds confiscated from drug traffickers was used to finance the

implementation of training programmes and the purchase of equipment for the civilian police, while the remaining 40 per cent was earmarked for programmes to promote public awareness of the danger of drugs. In 1997 Costa Rica had in fact seized 9 tons of cocaine and had incinerated large quantities of marijuana.

43. Although her country was no more than a centre for transit towards the north, it needed international assistance in order to purchase equipment and to familiarize its staff with new technologies. Only transnational cooperation could resolve a transnational problem.

44. **Mr. Amirkhizi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that it was essential to adopt a global strategy and to elaborate an international convention in order to combat transnational organized crime which was constantly increasing and threatened not only the security of nations but also their political stability and social order. Progress had been made in preparatory work on the convention and, in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/14, the decision would be taken to establish an open-ended intergovernmental ad hoc committee responsible for elaborating an international convention on all aspects of efforts to combat transnational organized crime and to discuss the elaboration, as appropriate, of international instruments addressing trafficking in women and children and combating the illicit manufacture of and trafficking in firearms and other activities. The new instrument should concentrate on the adoption of practical policies and action to confront the existing threats and should be universally implemented. Mention should be made in that connection of the recommendations adopted by the Asian Regional Ministerial Workshop on Transnational Crime and Corruption, held at Manila in March 1998, particularly the Manila Declaration on the Prevention and Control of Transnational Crime. The 1998 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances could be taken as a model.

45. With respect to extradition, countries needed to be encouraged to expand mutual legal assistance and enact effective extradition legislation and bilateral treaties. The draft convention should also take into account the constitutional requirements of countries with respect to the extradition of nationals.

46. Another important issue was the use of territories as transit routes by international networks of drug traffickers. His country's geographical situation had made it extremely vulnerable in that respect. The draft convention should take into consideration the problems of transit countries, find ways to prevent laundering of criminal proceeds and mobilize the support of the international community to assist the transit countries in their fight against transnational criminal networks.

47. The foundations of any civilized society, namely morality and good governance, would be threatened if concerted international action was not taken to combat corruption. The poor and the weakest segments of society were particularly at risk. International cooperation in that field should be strengthened under a new convention. Corruption had undermined the foundations of the economy in developing countries and had considerably hindered the implementation of national development plans and the operation of economic and financial organizations. It should be noted that corruption had a strong criminogenic effect, and action should be taken to prosecute multinational and foreign companies which used methods to spread corruption among the citizens of target countries. The money and property obtained from such practices should be reimbursed to the country which had sustained such damage.

48. The abundance of firearms in a society, particularly in the absence of strict control regulations, facilitated the commission of violent crimes and posed a particular problem in countries racked by internal conflicts or social disorder. The illicit trafficking in firearms was growing rapidly as a result of the lack of harmonization of national legislation, regulations and policies. If the production of firearms was not regulated, it would be practically impossible to prevent their use for criminal purposes.

49. International and regional organizations as well as interested countries should provide technical assistance and advisory services to countries that needed them. Technical assistance programmes, while responding to the specific needs of different regions, should strengthen national capacities and also facilitate the exchange of information on legislative measures. Such programmes should provide for the organization of training courses and workshops for national organizations and officials responsible for criminal justice and for the development and implementation of bilateral, subregional, regional and international initiatives on the issue of criminal justice.

50. The Islamic Republic of Iran particularly supported the development and implementation of strategies for combating transnational organized crime through the expansion of cooperation with other entities of the United Nations system, the exchange of experience between developed and developing countries, the modernization of extradition agreements, the promotion of the role of the mass media in crime prevention, the adoption of new urban crime prevention strategies, the elimination of violence against

women and children, the modernization of criminal justice and the confiscation of proceeds from criminal activities.

51. **Mr. Rabuka** (Fiji) said that the twentieth special session of the General Assembly had provided the international community with an opportunity to assess the effectiveness of activities undertaken and to work out new strategies to fight the drug problem, focusing efforts essentially on demand reduction, the education of the population on the harmful effects of illicit synthetic stimulants, mutual legal assistance, the transfer of criminal proceedings, the establishment of new rules to prevent money-laundering and the establishment of alternative development programmes designed to eliminate illicit drug crops. His Government supported the role of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and believed that it needed additional resources in order to carry out its activities. The strategic location of Fiji in the South Pacific had allowed international criminal organizations to use if as a staging point for their illegal activities. A number of laws had been enacted to deal with those illegal activities. They included the Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters Act of 1997, under which the Fijian authorities could grant to, or request from other countries, assistance in the investigation and prosecution of serious crimes, and the Proceeds of Crimes Act, which authorized the confiscation of proceeds and properties from criminal activities; those provisions were intended to be complementary to the informal assistance already provided by the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and under relevant extradition legislation. The Substance Abuse Advisory Council Act, which was aimed at developing comprehensive substance abuse prevention, eradication and research programmes, had also been enacted. Non-governmental organizations and civil society were also involved in those efforts.

52. Given the linkage between drug abuse and drug trafficking, on the one hand, and poverty and unemployment, on the other, the international community should help small developing States to implement job-creation, educational and capacity-building programmes in order to help the most vulnerable population groups, which were likely to be the victims of drug abuse. Alternative development activities should therefore be seen as the only way of meeting the challenge. With declining official development assistance, uneven distribution of capital flows and the inability of small island States to take full advantage of the process of globalization and trade liberalization, it was imperative that such States should be given increased economic assistance in order to facilitate the implementation of effective programmes at the national level.

53. **Mr. Al-Humaimdi** (Iraq) said that at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly devoted to countering the world drug problem, the international community had declared its determination to resolve that problem, which had become widespread. For its part, Iraq had long expressed its desire to cooperate with the specialized international agencies within the framework of efforts to combat drug trafficking and had, *inter alia,* acceded to the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, the Protocol of 1972 amending that Convention, and the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988. Those instruments were now part of Iraq's legislation on drug matters. That legislation, in particular Act No. 68 of 1965, as well as the efforts made by the Ministries of Health and the Interior and the National Narcotics Control Board, had been largely responsible for making Iraq one of the few countries in the world where drugs were not produced and where trafficking did not occur. Moreover, specialized services organized special prevention programmes for all levels of society.

54. The economic sanctions imposed on Iraq had caused considerable losses of life and property in all areas, including the fight against drugs. Deprived of the necessary financial resources, Iraq could no longer participate in international and regional conferences and meetings devoted to combating drug trafficking, in particular the activities of INTERPOL, since October 1997. Furthermore, although the absence of a central authority in the country's autonomous northern region had paved the way for trafficking with neighbouring countries, the authorities were making sure that they informed the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, as they had done in 1992. The Iraqi Government fully appreciated the international community's efforts and was prepared to cooperate in order to put an end to drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking in drug-producing, drug-consuming and transit countries.

55. **Mr. Roustam-Zadeh** (Azerbaijan) noted that, on the eve of the third millennium, drug abuse was prevalent throughout the world and hampered the development of almost all States. For its part, Azerbaijan supported the provisions of the Political Declaration adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session and applied all its recommendations. Drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking were particularly dangerous for States that had recently regained their sovereignty and were having difficulties in implementing programmes relating to the banning and suppression of drugs.

56. Since achieving independence, Azerbaijan had been giving high priority to the fight against drug abuse, despite

considerable economic difficulties stemming from the occupation by Armenia of over 20 per cent of its territory and the presence of nearly a million refugees and displaced persons. Moreover, the obstacles encountered in the "Balkans connection" had forced international criminal organizations to seek new routes for channelling drugs to Europe and the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, including across the borders of Azerbaijan controlled by the Armenian armed forces. In fact, occupied Azerbaijani territory, where narcotics were manufactured from crops cultivated locally, had become a transit point for drugs. Thus the violation of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity was helping the international drug mafia to globalize its activities and conquer new markets.

57. In Azerbaijan itself, the situation only deteriorated from year to year. Drug-related crime, particularly violent crime, and the confiscation of drugs were on the rise. There was a growing number of drug addicts and, apart from the cannabis and opium which could already be found in the region, new narcotic drugs were making their appearance. Azerbaijan's geographic location (at the crossroads of Europe and Asia) and climate (plants used in the manufacture of narcotic drugs could be grown there), the opening of new transport routes and the exploitation of oil in the Caspian Sea were all attractive elements to international organized crime, which sought to make the country an area for the transit and sale of new narcotic drugs. Unfortunately, the Azerbaijani border police and customs services and the law enforcement authorities responsible for drug control had but limited resources (particularly in the areas of control, communication and training) to combat the phenomenon.

58. Nonetheless, the Azerbaijani authorities were doing their utmost to shield the country from the influence of drug traffickers. The drug control policy was among the national priorities: a government commission, headed by a Deputy Prime Minister, had been set up and a national drug control programme had been adopted. The efforts made within that framework, political stability and the country's economic boom, as well as the history and traditions of the Azerbaijani people, had already yielded concrete results, which should be reinforced through support from international organizations. Moreover, campaigns were being organized with a view to building awareness of the drug problem and of the need to return to traditional values.

59. Azerbaijan needed assistance in developing drug control legislation, and with materials for educating youth and measures to reduce the demand for drugs and to treat drug addicts. In that connection, contacts must be strengthened at the intergovernmental level in the areas of drug-abuse control and the exchange of information on drug traffickers.

60. His delegation was grateful to UNDCP for the assistance, particularly the financial assistance, it had already furnished in all those areas. Azerbaijan was convinced that, with further assistance from the United Nations system, not only would the country be able to combat drug addiction and drug trafficking with the necessary effectiveness but that the situation in the entire region would be improved as well. The UNDCP agreement concluded in Baku in February 1997 relating to illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs in the Near and Middle East recommended that all States should condemn the violation of national borders and territorial integrity and recognize that foreign occupation could hamper the fight against drug trafficking.

61. On the initiative of Azerbaijan, that agreement recommended, in particular, facilitating the extradition of persons accused of drug-related offences; denying such persons political asylum, citizenship or any other form of protection; and expelling them. Azerbaijan also proposed that the countries concerned should deny such persons the opportunity to become naturalized, to secure a residence permit, to work, to start a business or a gambling establishment and to invest. Since casinos, lottery games and other games of chance could serve as fronts for laundering drug money, international instruments should require States to inform law enforcement authorities of the opening of gambling establishments and monitor their activities more closely. Lastly, in view of the danger of illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, a stronger international mechanism should be established in order to ensure that all States assumed their responsibility in that area.

62 **Ms. Aponte de Zacklin** (Venezuela) said that the danger of drugs and drug-related crime, aggravated by the processes of globalization and economic transformation, constituted a priority concern of the international community. At the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, States had undertaken a firm commitment to work together to seek solutions to that scourge. On that occasion, the President of Venezuela had reaffirmed his full support for the Political Declaration adopted by consensus. In keeping with that Declaration, strategies must be undertaken within the framework of concerted regional and international action on the basis of the principles of equality, shared responsibility and full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States.

63. The integrated approach taken by Venezuela stressed prevention, since civil society was involved in the efforts of the National Drug Control Commission within the framework of community activities and education campaigns. Aware that strengthened international cooperation was necessary to combat drugs effectively, her Government had taken initiatives designed to strengthen its ties with other countries and multilateral organizations. It had ratified an agreement with Guyana; organized the first meeting of the joint Venezuelan-Mexican Commission, held in Caracas; concluded a cooperation agreement with Colombia; and participated in the twenty-second session of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) of the Organization of American States (OAS) on money-laundering and the third meeting of a group of CICAD/OAS experts, held in Washington.

64. **Ms. Sandru** (Romania) said that Romania, like other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, was affected by the drug problem. The participation of Romania's President in the twentieth special session of the General Assembly had demonstrated the country's resolve to play an active role in the international struggle against that scourge. Although the country was not yet equipped with all the structures necessary to combat illicit drug trafficking effectively, the Romanian authorities had taken action in three areas: legislative improvement, institutional reform and the launching of awareness-building programmes. A bill on the campaign against illicit drug consumption and drug trafficking would soon be submitted to the Parliament, and Romania had ratified all three international conventions relating to those issues. The National Programme to Combat Illicit Drugs provided for the establishment of an Interministerial Committee to coordinate national efforts. In addition, a national centre for the study of organized crime and the drug problem, and for research and training, would be established in the near future.

65. Romania had benefited from the support of UNDCP experts in introducing necessary amendments to its legislation and modernizing its drug analysis laboratories. Activities carried out thus far by UNDCP demonstrated the Programme's capacity to fulfil the new mandates assigned to it by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session.

66. With regard to regional and bilateral cooperation, Romania had concluded a number of bilateral agreements with Governments of neighbouring countries, and of other countries in Europe or on other continents, with a view to implementing joint policies and programmes and launching crime-prevention and law enforcement mechanisms with respect to drugs. Those arrangements were aimed at combating international terrorism; illicit trafficking in radioactive materials, weapons and ammunition; trafficking in women and children; and other drug-related criminal activities. Romania had efficiently cooperated in that field with the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the European Police Office (EUROPOL) and the European Union under its Phare programme.

67. On the subject of crime prevention and criminal justice, international organized crime and drug traffic were interrelated scourges, threatening security, stability and democratic development. The new Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention ought to enable the United Nations to respond effectively to those challenges. The Centre for International Crime Prevention should set clear priorities and expand its operations.

68. In accordance with the recommendations of the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, the World Ministerial Conference on Organized Transnational Crime and the Council of Europe, Romania had continued to strengthen its legal machinery, develop preventive mechanisms against crime and reform its criminal justice system. In April 1993, a police squad was set up to counter organized crime and corruption and neutralize the transnational crime networks. In addition, an inter-ministerial council to combat crime, established in October 1995, had elaborated an anti-crime programme centred on updating the relevant legislation, improving the skills of law-enforcement personnel, developing a partnership between the police and the communities, and making the public aware of the crime problem by means of other programmes that sought to reach the groups at risk, such as children, young people, women and others. The Romanian Parliament had almost concluded consideration of an important draft law on money-laundering.

69. In addition to bilateral arrangements relating to international drug control, Romania had concluded a number of trilateral agreements with neighbouring countries like Bulgaria, Turkey, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, as a way of developing regional cooperation in the struggle against transnational organized crime. Another significant step had been the recent establishment in Bucharest of a centre for southeast European cooperation in combating corruption and organized crime.

70. Romania would participate actively in the preparations for the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, which would be held in Austria in 2000.

71. **Mr. Hadjiargyrou** (Cyprus) said that his Government's determination to deal with organized crime

was reflected in its ratification of the United Nations conventions intended to promote international cooperation in the area of criminal justice and of two related European conventions. As an associated country, Cyprus was closely cooperating with the European Union on transnational crime. It had also concluded bilateral agreements with most of its neighbouring countries as well as others, with a view to combating the resultant problems. Nationally, Cyprus was hosting liaison officers from 17 countries and worked with INTERPOL and other agencies because it attached great importance to exchanging information and intelligence.

72. Over the past two decades, the drug traffic had taken on unprecedented proportions and had to be dealt with in a multilateral context. The twentieth special session of the General Assembly had proved that the international community, at the threshold of the third millennium, was resolved to confront the drug problem and provide the impetus for sustained action on the basis of cooperation on all levels, international, national and local. The international community's efforts, however, would not have the desired results if the root causes of the problem were not attacked, namely, poverty and socio-economic imbalances, unemployment, lack of educational opportunities and the alienation so prevalent. The reduction of drug consumption was an integral part of the overall strategy, which had to be combined with steps taken nationally and internationally. It was also important to take an integrated approach that would eliminate the cultivation of the plants used in producing illicit drugs while financing crop substitution and setting up social reintegration programmes for drug addicts. Police and judicial cooperation must also be extended in order to pursue drug traffickers systematically.

73. Although Cyprus had a relatively drug-free society, the Government did not underestimate the threat of the infiltration of drugs into the culture. A public information campaign was part of its national policy to drive home the message that drugs were a mortal danger. A national committee to prevent drug trafficking and drug use had been established, and its task was to coordinate activities and provide advice in matters of prevention and information.

74. Because of its geographical position, Cyprus could easily be used by the drug cartels for funnelling drugs into Europe. That was why the Government was carrying out a policy of border controls, in cooperation with other countries that had an interest in intercepting the flow of drugs into Europe. Cyprus was also seeking to protect itself against money-laundering by criminal groups, an area on which UNDCP and many Governments were focusing their efforts. As stated in a recent United States State Department report, the Cypriot Government had been extremely active in 1997 in its efforts to implement provisions of its anti-money-laundering legislation. A UNDCP report dated 29 May 1998 also cited those efforts, as did the report of a Council of Europe committee of experts.

75. Cyprus would continue to fight against drugs and the illegal activities associated with them, as evidenced by the steps the Government had already taken. Unfortunately, the continuing occupation of 37 per cent of the country's territory was preventing the Government from exercising effective control in the occupied area, where serious criminal activity was reported to be taking place. Organized crime was likely to continue to expand in keeping with the pace of globalization. A small State like Cyprus therefore considered it imperative to strengthen international cooperation.

Organization of work

76. **The Chairman** informed members that it had been decided at a meeting of the Bureau the previous day that the Committee would use one meeting each week to take decisions on the draft proposals before it. The date would be announced as much in advance as possible. The Bureau had felt that delegations could thus better organize their work schedules. Accordingly, the Committee would take decisions on all drafts submitted under agenda items 100 (Social development), 101 (Crime prevention and criminal justice) and 102 (International drug control) during the morning meeting on Friday, 16 October. The afternoon meeting that day had been cancelled in order to allow a discussion group of the Third and Second Committees to meet on the occasion of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.

77. If time allowed, the Committee should plan to take decisions on all other draft proposals in the afternoon meetings on Thursday, 22 October, and Friday, 30 October. It would be informed in advance of the draft proposals in question. The Bureau hoped that by thus organizing the Committee's work, consultations would be facilitated, especially for the smaller delegations.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.